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THE season of summer Bible schools has drawn to a close. Evidently from their popularity it may be concluded that the "summer-study" idea has not lost its hold upon the people. It is a matter for satisfaction also that so many people are awake to their need of Bible knowledge and sufficiently desirous of obtaining the knowledge to give themselves to Bible study at these times. There would be unalloyed satisfaction, indeed, in this prospect, were it not for certain features in the results of this study which call for unfavorable comment. It must be allowed that many who attend these "Bible-assemblies" and hang upon the lips of eloquent lecturers seem to fail in carrying away with them any real, fruitful knowledge of the Bible,—knowledge which they can use, which is permanent. How few will find their ability as teachers in our Sunday Schools increased and developed by their summer's work! Yet the result of this kind of study ought to show itself in the presence of an enlarged number of workers in Sunday Schools and in a higher quality of service rendered in the teaching of God's word.

What is the trouble? For one thing in many of these so-called schools for Bible-study there is no *study* at all. People are interested, perhaps even stirred and stimulated by the eloquence and earnestness of some student and lover of the Scriptures. But it is only a transient interest and emotion. No real, honest work has been done; the mind and heart have not been brought into a hand-to-hand grapple with the facts and truths of the Bible itself. Therefore the results in that case are meagre. Again, others of our summer Bible assemblies are gathered ostensibly for Bible study but really

for the study and glorification of some doctrine or practice which is sincerely thought to be at the basis of, or to be of overshadowing prominence among, the truths of Revelation. Those who gather here are all of one mind. They care to see nothing in the Bible but their own particular theory and of course they find what they are looking for. In other words, while in the one case there was no *study*, in this case there is really no *Bible-study*—no open-minded, clear-headed investigation into the truths and facts of the Word. The outcome here is as barren and unprofitable as before. If there is anything which a broad, careful and extended study of the Scriptures—real *study* of the *Word*—will accomplish, it is to keep men from fanaticism, from extravagance in theological statement, from one-sidedness of theological position—and to make them broad-minded, able to think with Paul without excommunicating James, to love with the apostle while joining with the denunciation of the prophet.

It is worth while to suggest that what is needed in the summer assemblies is less of what has been entitled in these pages “Bible-listening” and more of study, as well as more attention to the Bible in its completeness and less devotion to abstract and independent theories which it is supposed to teach. When this comes to pass, pastors of churches and leaders in Sunday School work will have great rejoicing for it will mean more well-balanced and large-hearted hearers in the pews as well as more and better equipped helpers in the teaching of the Bible to the young.

GIVEN large knowledge, high attainments of intellect, keen sensibility, ardent piety ; breadth and depth of spiritual experience—and you have a marvelous equipment for teaching the Scriptures. They who have come in the course of their student-life under the informing, stimulating and uplifting influence of a teacher of the Bible endowed after this fashion can never lose the impulse and insight into truth there gained. The union of the Man and the Book produced the highest type of power to rouse and elevate the soul. They are happy who can exercise it ; they also are happy to whom it is given to receive such impressions.

But shall they who cannot wield such power yield up their

work, despairing of the endeavor adequately to teach those who are given to them to train in the knowledge of the Word? Then shall our schools be sadly to seek for teachers and many a pulpit be silent. These men of mighty original energy and enthusiasm are few. They can never accomplish the service in Bible training that our age demands. The many of lesser endowments are needed. But shall they, if they continue, perform their indispensable service, with fidelity indeed, yet hopeless, lacking the zeal and gladness which make service easy and redouble usefulness?

No, for in their case, even if the native force and weight that gives so great an intellectual and spiritual impulse be lacking, there yet remains the Book and the Book is, after all, the supreme, the essential element. The question is not as to the strength and reach of the man's mental powers and individual energies, but as to the completeness of his devotion to the Scriptures and the extent to which he teaches their truth. The touch-stone by which to try the character of the teacher is the fidelity of his devotion to the Bible. Many a brilliant and outwardly successful man has essentially failed because he has impressed himself and not the Truth upon his pupils. That teacher who hides himself behind the Book, who buries himself beneath it, and thus brings to bear the unadulterated and undimmed truth of its pages upon those whom he teaches—is successful in the highest sense. And here every one, who would engage in the work of teaching, however slender the stock of intellectual vigor or innate force or personal power, may have true success.

Try to know the best things about the Bible, search out honestly, and practice steadily, the wisest methods in teaching it, let self stand in the background, open humbly and faithfully the Word of Truth, put forward and lift high its facts and let them proclaim their message—and the most distinguished and eminent shall not surpass you in usefulness and power.

THE scientific study of the Scriptures seems to some people a dangerous, or an unhallowed, thing. But why should this be so? What is this scientific study of the Word of God but the use of a method that is approved of in other

matters as the method surest to lead to the truth. Is it anything other than the truth that we desire, in studying about the Bible, or in the Bible? The scientific method only seeks all the facts that relate to the matter in hand, and then asks for the inductions that these facts justify. Are facts dangerous, or the inductions from them unhallowed? No truth in the Bible, or out of it, can be shown to be false by facts. If any notions of ours can be overthrown, when all the related facts are taken into account, we surely have no use for these notions. Nor can it be dangerous or irreverent to abandon them.

THE scientific study of the Scriptures is not, therefore, in the slightest degree inconsistent with a conviction of their supernatural character. The scientific student of the Bible can, with as much heartiness as any other man, say, This book is the Word of God, and mean, in saying it, all that this expression can imply. For when he views the wonderful facts in the book itself, and in its history through the centuries, no other explanation but that of God, can to him account for it. The broader and the deeper his knowledge of these facts, the firmer his conviction grows that its authors were men moved by the Holy Ghost. It is only the superficial student of the Bible, or the timid student, or the student whose faith rests on the traditions of men, who trembles for the safety, or fears for the future, of the Bible. Never the man who knows well and truly the facts of its origin, of its character, or of its history.

NOR is the scientific study of the Bible the foe of a true spirituality and of a deeply religious life. To suppose this, would be to make religion a lie and a cheat. If spirituality and devotion must rest on a basis of falsehood, then there is no place for them in a true life. If they are to be born of facts, as surely they are, then the more facts, the more real religion, and spirituality of life. If the undevout astronomer is mad, because the true study of nature is simply a thinking of God's thoughts after Him, how much less of a true man is the undevout student of the stupendous facts of revelation.

If any man can view unmoved the facts that have attended the presence of the Father in this world of his children, and his onward march in the history of the race, the trouble must be with the man, and not with the facts. Such a man no other method of study than that of finding out the facts, could really help. Least of all could he be made profoundly religious by inventions or theories of men, that would be at bottom a lie.

THE Bible is God's great gift to men. Next to Himself, as Father, Son, and Spirit, it is his greatest gift. In what way, and by what method, shall it be studied? Shall we come to its study with some inferior method, or with our best? Which would be the greatest evidence of our gratitude and love for the book, and of our faith in its supreme importance to us as the children of God? Only the best is worthy of the best. What, then, is best in the study of the Bible. That must depend upon what we wish to obtain from our study of it. But all that is of real value to us, that may be obtained from Bible study, must be either the facts in its history and its contents, or else the inductions based upon these facts. In a matter of such supreme importance as our knowledge of the Bible, we surely wish to have no mere theories or conjectures, most of all no falsehoods. But for all knowledge of facts, and for all use of facts, the scientific method is confessed by all students to be the best. It is the great triumph and the great glory of modern thought. How, then, can any true lover of the Bible, come to its study with any other method? To use any other method in its study, would be to degrade the Bible below the level of the matters of the daily and worldly life of man. It would be saying that the Bible is not worthy of man's best method of study, or that it cannot endure it. Better and wiser is it to say, for God's great gift, man's best work.